THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (d) National Highways are constructed as per the prescribed standards within the available resources. However, there exists missing links of 62 km length where road has not been constructed. Construction in 10 km of missing links has been sanctioned this year at an estimated cost of Rs. 14.69 crore and in the balanced length construction is targeted to be sanctioned in next two years. Widening of National Highways is being done in a phased manner. During the last two years widening to two lane of approximately 410 km length amounting to Rs. 62.40 crore has been sanctioned. Government of Rajasthan had apprised the requirement of fund amounting to Rs. 230 crore for widening of 1211 km of National Highways in Rajasthan which have been entrusted to them for maintenance and development. During the current year widening to two lanes in 133 km has been sanctioned at an estimated cost of Rs. 47.67 crore. The widening in the remaining reaches is targeted to be sanctioned in the current and next Five Year Plan.

Sponsorship to sportspersons

*240. SHRI HARISH RAWAT:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government plan to fully sponsor sportsmen who can finally be trained for international events;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, whether it is a fact that talented sportspersons from rural areas will not be able to compete in the international events?

THE MINISTER OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS (SHRI SUNIL DUTT): (a) Development of sports including the scouting and nurturing of talent is, primarily, the responsibility of the concerned National Sports Federations and the State Governments. However, the Government of India is supplementing the efforts of National Sports Federations and State Governments in the following manner:—

(i) Finalization and implementation of Long Term Development Plans (LTDPs) for various sports disciplines in consultation with the

concerned National Sports Federations, former international sportspersons and sports scientists/experts.

(ii) Provision of equipment and scientific support to sportspersons.

(iii) Intensive coaching of the players by Indian and foreign coaches in coaching camps.

(iv) Intensive training abroad to the teams as well Indian Coaches.

(v) Financial assistance to concerned federations for participation of sportspersons in international tournaments.

(vi) The outstanding boys and girls are provided scholarships so that they can have nutritious diet, sports equipment support and be able to pursue sports as a career. Scholarships are also given to women for undertaking research in sports related subjects.

(vii) Assistance for purchase of equipment, scientific support and training and participation within the country and abroad is provided under the 'Scheme relating to Talent Search and Training' and the 'National Sports Development Fund'.

(viii) With a view to broad basing of sports and scouting for talent at a young age, the Government is assisting Army under 'Army Boys Sports Company Scheme' (ABSC). In addition to eight existing ABSCs,ten more ABSCs have been sanctioned during the current year.

(ix) 25 Navodaya Vidyalayas have been approved to be included in the National Talent Search Contest Scheme (NTSC) during the current year.

(x) Training to meritorious sportspersons in the age group of 14-21 years on the basis of their performance at state/national level competition at Sports Authority of India (SAI) Training centres with facilities of board/lodging, kitting expenses, accident insurance, competition exposure etc.

(b) As indicated in (a) above.

(c) No, Sir. The facilities mentioned above in part (a) are available to meritorious/talented sportspersons irrespective of his/her belonging to rural/urban area. A large number of prominent sportspersons from rural

areas have been able to take advantage of programmes of Sports Authority of India. More than forty prominent sportspersons have excelled in the disciplines of Athletics, Archery, Hockey, Boxing, Basket Ball, Foot Ball, Gymnastics etc. in the recent past.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

REGP in Uttar Pradesh

1696. SHRI SHAHID SIDDIQUI: Will the Minister of AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have established Agro and Rural Industries in Uttar Pradesh under the Rural Employment Generation Programme during the last two years;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the funds that have been allocated for this purpose and the steps taken so far to implement this programme?

THE MINISTER OF AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES (SHRI MAHABIR PRASAD): (a) The Government does not set up units under the Rural Employment Generation Programme (REGP). Under this Programme, units are set up by entrepreneurs by availing of margin money assistance from the Government through the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) and loan from public sector scheduled commercial banks and selected regional rural banks, cooperative banks, etc.

(b) In the State of Uttar Pradesh, 1677 units were set up in 2002-03 and 2134 units in 2003-04 under the REGP.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Margin money assistance of Rs. 2293.52 lakh and Rs. 3415.18 lakh were released during 2002-03 and 2003-04 respectively to the units set up under the REGP in Uttar Pradesh. Further, the KVIC regularly reviews the progress of implementation of projects under the REGP with the banks, takes necessary steps to expedite the release of financial assistance and also provides assistance through entrepreneurship development programmes, awareness camps, market development, etc.